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**UNIDO's cooperation with international partner
organizations, particularly FAO, ILO and UNEP**

Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management

Note by the Secretariat

Provides background information on the completion of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and proposes a Board recommendation to the General Conference for the endorsement of SAICM. For more information, the complete SAICM documents can be viewed at <http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/>.

1. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development on 4 September 2002 endorsed in paragraph 23 the development of a strategic approach to chemicals management.¹
2. The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) was completed and adopted by the first International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM I, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 4 to 6 February 2006), whose participants included representatives of 151 Governments, nine organizations of the United Nations system, eight intergovernmental organizations and 47 non-governmental organizations, including the International Council of Chemical

¹ Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002 (United Nations publications, Sales no. E.03.II.A1), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

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Associations (ICCA) and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

3. SAICM aims, inter alia, to meet the concern that chemicals continue to contaminate the environment worldwide, impairing the health and welfare of millions. It responds to the stated need to assess and manage chemicals more effectively in order to achieve the 2020 goal, articulated in paragraph 23 of the plan of implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), namely that “by 2020 chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment”. SAICM therefore constitutes a significant contribution towards the internationally agreed development goals set out in the Millennium Declaration. The main stakeholders in SAICM are Governments, regional economic integration organizations, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and individuals involved in the management of chemicals throughout their life cycles from all relevant sectors, including, but not limited to, agriculture, environment, health, industry, development cooperation, labour and science. Individual stakeholders include consumers, disposers, employers, farmers, producers, regulators, researchers, suppliers, transporters and workers.

4. The scope of SAICM includes: (a) environmental, economic, social, health and labour aspects of chemical safety; and (b) agricultural and industrial chemicals, with a view to promoting sustainable development and covering chemicals at all stages of their life cycle, including in products. It does not cover products where health and environmental aspects are regulated by a domestic food or pharmaceutical authority or arrangement. SAICM is not a legally binding instrument.

5. SAICM is comprised of three core texts:² the Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management, the Overarching Policy Strategy (OPS) and the Global Plan of Action (GPA). The Dubai Declaration states that fundamental changes are needed in the way that societies manage chemicals, as the global production, trade and use of chemicals are increasing. These growth patterns place an increasing chemicals management burden on developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in particular the least developed countries and developing small island States, and present them with special difficulties in meeting this challenge.

6. The OPS names several elements of cleaner production (CP), such as the minimization of risks throughout the life cycle of chemicals; the prioritization of the application of preventive measures such as pollution prevention; the promotion of, and further innovation in, environmentally sound and safer alternatives; informed substitution of chemicals of particular concern and non chemical alternatives; reduction of hazardous waste, both in quantity and toxicity; environmentally sound management of hazardous waste, including its storage, treatment and disposal; and promotion of environmentally sound recovery and recycling of hazardous materials and waste.

7. The GPA contains activities that can be undertaken voluntarily by stakeholders, according to their applicability, in order to pursue the commitments and objectives expressed in the high-level declaration and the OPS. The main

² See full text in <http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/SAICM%20texts/SAICM%20documents.htm>.

elements in the GPA with relevance for UNIDO are the encouragement of sustainable production, pollution prevention policies and implementation of best available technologies and best environmental practices (BAT/BEP), including the establishment of national CP centres; clear priority setting in sound chemicals management; promotion of substitution of hazardous substances and products; waste management and minimization in regard to the generation of waste; promotion of resource efficiency; development of environmentally sound technologies; formulation of prevention and response measures to mitigate environmental and health impacts of emergencies involving chemicals through the application of process safety management; promotion of corporate social and environmental responsibility and sound chemicals management across the product chain; life cycle model policies; and integration of chemicals management in sustainable production and consumption.

8. ICCM I, as well as the whole process of its preparation – three meetings of the Preparatory committee, in Bangkok, Nairobi, and Vienna (organized by UNEP along with the inter-organizational Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) and the intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) as co-convenors) – was supported by the IOMC, whose membership is made up of FAO, ILO, OECD, UNEP, UNIDO, UNITAR, and WHO, with UNDP and the World Bank as observers. On the occasion of ICCM I the Director-General of UNIDO, along with the Executive Heads of the other international partner organizations in IOMC, delivered a joint statement³ recognizing that the sound management of chemicals is essential for the protection of human health and the environment and sustainable development.

9. ICCM I also adopted a resolution establishing the Quick Start Programme (QSP) for the implementation of the objectives of SAICM. QSP includes a trust fund, as well as other forms of cooperation, including both multilateral and bilateral ones. Its objective is to support initial enabling capacity-building and implementation activities in developing countries, least developed countries, small island developing States, and countries with economies in transition. The Conference invited the representatives of the seven participating organizations of IOMC and UNDP to form an implementation committee for projects financed by the QSP trust fund and decided to establish the QSP Executive Board, consisting of two government representatives from each of the regions and all the bilateral and multilateral donors and other contributors to the programme. The “broader” QSP includes further contributions by donors, such as chemical management implementation activities by the UNIDO-UNEP Global Cleaner Production Programme. UNIDO has been included in the Trust Fund Implementation Committee, which will allow due weight to be given to UNIDO’s considerations in funding decisions associated with the QSP. There is also an opportunity to seek additional funding from the QSP trust fund by developing projects that can be submitted to the SAICM secretariat

10. ICCM I further adopted a resolution on the future role of IFCS, which provides an open, transparent and inclusive forum for brainstorming and bridge building for Governments, intergovernmental organizations and industry and public interest non-governmental organizations.

³ See full text in <http://www.who.int/iomc/saicm/en/index.html>.

11. ICCM I took some decisions regarding institutional arrangements to support the implementation of SAICM. The Conference will be served by a UNEP-based secretariat. Other arrangements to take stock of progress on SAICM will include national focal points, national coordination, regional focal points, regional meetings (as appropriate) and, at the international level, a periodic review process. To this end, the Conference will be reconvened in 2009 (ICCM II), 2012, 2015 and 2020 in order to review progress in the implementation of SAICM. In addition, IOMC was requested to continue to perform a coordinating function for intergovernmental organization activities and work programmes.

12. The ICCM referred SAICM to the governing bodies of relevant intergovernmental organizations for possible endorsement or acknowledgement and integration into their respective programmes of work and to report thereon to the International Conference on Chemicals Management at its second session in 2009. These intergovernmental organizations, along with national Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, are all expected to play a part in the implementation of SAICM. UNIDO's part is to strengthen the capacity of the industrial sectors of the developing countries and countries with economies in transition to participate fully and effectively in the implementation of SAICM.

13. The Governing Council of UNEP, at its ninth special session, adopted a decision endorsing SAICM and the role and activities of UNEP in relation to its implementation. The World Health Assembly of WHO took note of the outcomes of the Strategic Approach at its 59th session in May 2006, as did the Board of Trustees of UNITAR, which endorsed the process in March 2006. The Council of FAO endorsed SAICM at its 131st session in November 2006, while the governing body of ILO did so on the occasion of its 297th session.

14. The Board may wish to recommend to the General Conference the adoption of the following draft decision:

“The General Conference:

“(a) Takes note of the information provided in document IDB.33/20;

“(b) Also notes the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management as contained in the Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management, the Overarching Policy Strategy and the Global Plan of Action;

“(c) Supports the participation of UNIDO in the implementation of the Strategic Approach.”
